

# American sells Arlington hotel to Dallas group

By JOHN SPELICH  
Star-Telegram Writer

American Airlines Monday closed the book on hotel ownership with the sale of the 310-room Flagship Inn resort and convention center in Arlington to a Dallas-based group.

The era-ending sale received low-key treatment from American officials, who marked the occasion with a two-paragraph press release.

The Flagship Inn, the last of a 21-hotel chain American had acquired between 1965 and 1979, was sold Monday to a group of investors headed by a Grand Prairie man who used to cut grass and plant shrubs around the 310-room resort and convention center.

Metropolitan Ventures Inc., headed by President Tom Morris, purchased the hotel from American Airlines for an undisclosed amount, said Joe Stroop, manager of American Airlines corporate communications.

Metropolitan Ventures Inc., a real estate and financial services group, plans to "continue to operate the hotel as a first class property," Stroop said.

Morris, 33, a graduate of Grand Prairie High School who attended Texas Christian University in Fort Worth, also painted hotel rooms and

managed a restaurant owned by the hotel during his youth, said Kitty Morris, the owner's mother and a Grand Prairie insurance and real estate agent.

Morris was unavailable for comment Monday.

Ed MacMillan, who will manage the Flagship, also was unavailable for comment.

Metropolitan Ventures Inc. officials plan to improve the Flagship Inn by adding more rooms in a high-rise tower to be built on the balance of the hotel property, industry sources said.

Redevelopment of the property could involve tearing down some existing structures, sources said.

American Airlines, which entered the hotel business in 1965, began divesting itself of hotel properties in 1979 and 1980 with the sale of the Americana Hotel chain.

The hotels were sold on the orders of American Airlines Chairman Albert Casey because they were losing substantial sums of money. The hotels were one of several unprofitable subsidiaries trimmed by Casey.

Sky Chefs, a wholly-owned subsidiary of American Airlines, had bought the 20-acre Flagship Inn property from the Great Southwest Corp. in 1973. The hotel underwent extensive renovations in 1981.

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Jan 10, 2025